

Suicide - 1936

MAKES SUICIDE LEAP INTO THE BUFFALO BAYOU

Was Despondent Over Family Troubles (Friends Say)

HOUSTON. — After announcing his intention to kill himself, Early Jackson, 25, of 105 Spruce street, leaped from the McKee Street bridge and was drowned in Buffalo bayou about 6:45 p.m. last Saturday.

The body was recovered by volunteers with the use of a boat and grappling hooks. Justice of the Peace Tom Maes rendered an inquest verdict of suicide.

Friends of the dead man told officers Jackson had been despondent over family troubles all Saturday afternoon.

Arthur Woods, 45, who witnessed the tragedy, told officers he met Jackson at a filling station on Gable street near the bridge late Saturday afternoon.

"Early Jackson told me at the filling station he was going to kill himself by jumping in the bayou," Woods stated. "He said he loved a woman by the name of — who he had a child by, and that they had been separated. He said he was going to kill himself because the woman would not go back to him."

A white man who runs the filling station told Early to sit down on the steps. Early sat on the steps of the filling station until the man got busy, and then he got up and walked off.

"Early left running towards the bridge. I ran towards the bridge to try to stop him. I got to the bridge just in time to see him jump into the water."

Woods, who said he notified the dead man's brother, James Jackson, of the tragedy, said he could tell that Early had been drinking heavily before his death.

Elijah McGhee, 45, of 2115 Canal, told of seeing Jackson scribble something in a small red notebook Saturday afternoon. No trace of the notebook had been found Tuesday, officers said.

"Early and I were sitting on the

porch at Tom Brown's house, at 1823 Lyle street," McGhee stated. "Early and I were talking about work, and Early said it was a shame that all the rest of the boys had paydays coming and he didn't have any because he didn't have a regular job."

"We went in the house, and Early pulled out a small red notebook and began writing in it. I asked him what he was writing, and he said 'You will see what I am writing'."

Officers said McGhee and Stafford Green, 96 Spruce street, retrieved Jackson's body from the bayou Saturday night.

Jonah Jackson, 60, father of the deceased, was said to have told officers that Early had had trouble with his wife on August 10, and that they had been separated since that time. The father said he knew of no other motive for the

STARKEST TRAGEDY IS REVEALED IN HARRIS SUICIDE PACT LETTERS

(Detailed Story on Page 1)

RICHMOND, Va.—The following are letters written to Sylvester Harris, his son, by George Harris, well-known retired caterer, shortly before he placed a .38 calibre pistol to his head and fired twice, committing suicide here.

The letters, which were turned over to police, disclosed the motive for Mr. Harris' act.

Dear Sylvester: Forgive me for what I have done and pray for me.—But I cannot go on any longer. For twenty months I have had it pretty tough, am not here longer. We are lonely and almost friendless. If I had some cash money I could possibly hold out. Your mother will never get well again and I am almost crazy. I cannot keep up, so try and do the best you can. We have no one to comfort us in our old age. You did fine and God will bless you.

"Do not give us no expensive burial. Simple and quiet. I have two insurance policies—enough to bury us and some more to help out in the bills that will be coming up.—Good bye and may God bless you. You have been a treasure to your parents. Good bye.

"DAD."

"The thing to do, first there is \$500 due on 509 and I signed up for a renewal which cost \$25 and interest note \$15, total \$40, which is due. Second, there is two months interest on 50 due—\$40 on some one interest note; \$20.00 due on 509. So if you and Jack want to save the property, see to it at once.

"There is also money due on the furniture. I held on as long as I could, but where you have all the members of the family against you, a sick wife to look after and in debt, it's more than I can stand. It is driving me crazy which is more than death itself. We feel that we are a burden on you all. No one is happy or have anything that is cheerful. Engage a good lawyer and have the will probated. When I had money and could put out I was all right."

"See that Grinwell gets his money. He has been a real friend to me. The will you will find in the safe in the Bible. I hope you and yours

and the family my best wishes. I hope that none of your lives will be, when you grow old, like your mother's and mine. Again I bid good bye to you all.—DAD."

"I have a section in Woodlawn cemetery all paid for. You will find the certificate in the safe. Any trouble see Mr. Wright. We bought at the same time.—DAD."

Suicides - 1936

BIRMINGHAM, ALA. NEWS

JAN 13 1936

Homicides And Suicides In The Southern States

Recently the Census Bureau announced the findings of a special study of homicides and suicides over a period of 14 years. The most significant aspect of the study is the geographical distribution of homicides and suicides.

The Southern states are shown, in general, to have the highest homicide rates. This fact, of course, has long been recognized; but it is brought out in a particularly striking way by the Census Bureau's survey.

The highest homicidal death rates were found in Alabama, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. The lowest homicide rates were found in Wisconsin, Vermont, South Dakota, Rhode Island, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Iowa and Connecticut. Sectionally, New England has the best record in this respect, and the South the worst.

There is a wide variation between the highest and the lowest homicide rates. The highest homicidal death rate reached by any state during the 14 years covered in the survey was 51.2 per 100,000 population in Florida in 1926. The lowest rate in that period was only 0.2 per 100,000 population in New Hampshire, in 1932, when there was only one killing in the state in the whole year. New Hampshire also had the lowest average for the 14-year period. Thus Florida, in 1926, had a homicide rate more than 250 times as high as New Hampshire's in 1932.

Students of this problem recognize the fact that the racial situation in the South is largely responsible for the high homicide rate in this section. This is primarily due to the high homicide rate among Negroes. White people kill Negroes to an appalling extent in the South, and Negroes kill white people at a rate which is alarmingly high. But the biggest factor in the situation is the shocking frequency with which Negroes kill other Negroes.

Among themselves, Negroes hold human life cheaply. It is a distressing situation which has received much attention from both white and Negro leaders, but not nearly

so much as it should have.

Only a few days ago, Prof. A. Heinenburg, of Tuskegee Institute, in an address before a Negro audience in Birmingham, gave a thoughtful discussion of this problem. He pointed out that murders among Negroes overshadowed the number of lynchings, and appealed to the Negroes of Birmingham to "cease murdering among themselves." It is an appeal which should be taken up by every Negro leader in every Southern community, for it is largely by the precept and example of the more enlightened members of the race that this evil situation must be remedied.

If the South has the worse homicide record, it has the best record in the matter of suicides. The Western states have, in general, the highest suicide rates. Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming lead in suicides. The lowest suicide rates are found in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah.

Just as the racial situation accounts largely for the higher homicide rates in the South, so does it go far to explain the low suicide record. If Negroes kill one another all too freely, they seldom take their own lives. A Negro suicide is a rarity.

It has always been assumed that the low suicide rate among Negroes is due to the temperament of the race. Negroes are happy-spirited people. They are not as a rule subject to the morbidity which so often leads white persons to commit suicide. Troubles do not weigh so heavily upon their minds.

Undoubtedly the happy disposition of Negroes is a factor in the low suicide rate among them. But a thoughtful Negro leader has suggested that this is not the only factor, and perhaps not even the chief one. He

thinks that one reason why Negroes are not much driven to suicide is the relative lack of pride, individually and racially, among them. He points out that Negroes do not usually feel disgrace which, in the case of white people, sometimes drives individuals to suicide. Again, he says, as a race Negroes are not much affected by disgrace. That is to say, Negroes as a whole will continue to accept individuals among them who have

been guilty of grave transgressions. Among white people, transgressors are usually ostracized from society. This difference between the races undoubtedly helps to ex-

plain why suicide is more prevalent among whites than among Negroes.

Of the six Supreme Court justices who held the AAA unconstitutional, four come from the agricultural states of Tennessee, Minnesota, Wyoming and Utah, while only two come from the industrial states of New York and Pennsylvania. Of the three judges who upheld the AAA, two come from New York and one from Lowell, Mass. These facts should be an answer to persons who say that the justices are influenced by geographical considerations.

Birmingham, Ala. News
January 13, 1936

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Sidney Roland Suicide

MISS SIDNEY ROLAND IS ALLEGED TO HAVE REFUSED MEDICAL AID IN DETERMINATION TO END ALL

Birmingham was shocked as the news flashed over the city last Sunday night that Miss Sidney Roland, who resided with her mother on Charles Street had taken poison in a successful effort to end her life.

Hundreds of questions have been asked as to her reason for having wanted to die—some say love, some say nagging, and others say ill health—it may have been any or all of these including the rumor that she was having to meet a heavy note endorsed for some one, but Sidney Roland is dead—one of the very few suicides having ever been committed by a Negro woman of her intelligence in Birmingham

Clarksville, Tenn., Chronicle
March 11, 1936

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO COLORED PEOPLE

ISAAC RANSOM BURIED

An extensive funeral service was conducted from the Woodlawn Baptist church Tuesday afternoon for Isaac Ransom, widely known negro farmer of District 4, whose tragic death from a razor wound self-inflicted, occurred Saturday at his home. Scripture was read by H. D. Garrell, the Rev. T. E. Winston lead in prayer and talks were made by T. E. Grinstead, Rev. Quarles and Rev. W. M. Gatlin.

Burial was in the family cemetery.

GALVESTON GIRL, 15, TRIES TO COMMIT SUICIDE IN EFFORT TO AVOID ATTENDING PRAYER MEET

Family Misunderstandings And Cruelty
Also Stated To Have Caused Student
To Become Despondent

GALVESTON—Because she did not wish to attend prayer meeting Rudella Young, 15 years old and a student of Central High School, attempted to commit suicide here last Wednesday night by taking a mixture composed of strychnine, furniture oil and poisonous eye medicine at her home. Miss Young resides with her father, Cornelius Young.

The neighborhood of 29th street and Avenue M½ was aroused by the shrill screams of the young girl, who was at the point of death. Neighbors came to her aid and rushed the unconscious form of the girl to John Sealy hospital where quick treatment saved her life.

When asked why she attempted suicide her father stated that she had done so because she did not wish to attend prayer meeting. The girl answered the question by saying "I wanted to be where my mother is and she is in heaven." She is a member of Mt. Olive Baptist church.

It is generally believed that because of family misunderstandings and cruelty the girl tried to take her life. Her father, in whose charge she was left after the death of her mother more than 11 years ago, does not allow her to go out or to receive company and these strict rules made her despondent.

A careful examination by hospital revealed that the girl was in perfect health before she took the poisonous mixture.

Negro Commits Suicide In Cemetery At Dothan

DOTHAN, ALA., May 18.—(Special)—Jack Brooks, negro, was found dead in a cemetery this morning. He had broken every racial tradition by shooting himself to death after killing Polly, May McDaniel, negro woman, who had jilted him.

Polly May was slain Saturday night and a citywide search was started for Jack.

Cemetery workers stumbled over his body this morning. He had left a note, too, explaining his suicide.

MAN IN TRAIN LEAP MAY RECOVER

NEW YORK, N.Y.—Thomas Banks, 25, an unemployed porter of 71 East 119th Street, who lost his right leg and received other injuries here Tuesday morning when he jumped himself into the path of a speeding southbound subway train at Lenox Avenue and 116th Street, may recover.

Beside the loss of the right leg, which was completely amputated, Banks suffered fractures of the left leg and a fractured skull. Physicians at Harlem Hospital, where he is being treated, said he had a fifty-fifty chance of recovering.

Negro Kills Self— First In 7 Years

The first recorded negro suicide in Shelby County, exclusive of Memphis, in seven years, was reported

by Sheriff J. C. Terrell. 30-year-old negro farm helper, living on Hack's Crossroads, went to a neighbor's home at 3 o'clock yesterday morning and ended his life by firing a shotgun charge into his heart.

WIDOW LEAPS; RIVER DEPTHS RECEIVE BODY

Nervous Breakdown Is
Believed Reason
for Her Act

10-24-36
New York
(Special to The Amsterdam News.)

GIRL SEES LOVER KILL HER MOTHER

Pittsburgh Boxer Then Blows Own Brains Out to Settle
Sudden Quarrel.

Murder and suicide marked finish to a love affair between a professional boxer and a waitress early Saturday morning, when the fighting lover fired three shots into the body of his sweetheart, while her seven-year-old daughter

CINCINNATI, O., Oct. 22.—Grieving over the death of her husband and suffering from a nervous breakdown, Mrs. Bessie Beatty, 45, widow of the late Attorney A. Lee Beatty, made a fatal leap from the C. and O. Railroad bridge into the Ohio river last week.

Rescue crews hastily summoned by witnesses were unsuccessful in locating the body, which sank without rising. Policeman Stanley Gronotte, on duty at the bridge, at the foot of Smith street, saw the woman leap and immediately notified Patrolmen George Plum and Raymond Brill.

Witness Tells Story.

According to the police, the woman started to cross the bridge from the Cincinnati end and, walking to the toll-house, asked the collector the toll rate for pedestrians. She then walked quickly to the side of the bridge, removed her coat and climbed the rail.

Gronotte rushed forward, telling her not to jump. She paused for a moment, then leaped into space. Gronotte said she turned over several times and struck the water upon her back. There was a short struggle and the body disappeared.

Several rivermen, working on barges, witnessed the leap and immediately set out in boats in an attempt to rescue her. They remained on the scene for an hour, but the body did not reappear. Identification was made later by Mrs. Beatty's sister, Mrs. Glowers, who identified the victim's coat.

Husband Was Prominent.

The victim's husband was one of this city's foremost members of the bar and held high rank in the councils of the Republican party. He was a former state representative, a noted criminal lawyer, and former Assistant United States District Attorney. In private practice most of his clients were white.

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NEGROES AND SUICIDE

A news dispatch from Dothan states that Jack Brooks, a negro of that city recently broke every racial tradition by shooting himself to death in a cemetery after he had killed a negro woman who had jilted him. He left a note explaining his act.

Suicide among negroes in the past has been so rare that the fact has been often commented upon by the public and the press. The editor of this newspaper recalls of having read two, perhaps three accounts of negro suicides. We have never actually known of such an instance. Someone has explained it by saying, that if a negro was so worried as to be tempted to end his own life he would sit down to think the matter over and drop off to sleep and when he awoke he was out of the notion. An element of truth exists in this observation no doubt.

Thought upon the suicide question makes us believe that it is an evil which goes along with civilization. So far as we remember our history there were no suicides among the early savage tribes. It has made its appearance as mankind has climbed upward in his intellectual life. This being true, perhaps it is an explanation of why negroes are becoming afflicted with the evil. Certainly they have and are making great strides upward in their intellectual life.

Native Woman Attempts Suicide.

NEGLECTED HER INDIAN CHILDREN.

Lela Kurene, a native woman living in Dundee, threw herself in front of a train a few days ago, and only escaped by a narrow margin, says the Sunday Times correspondent.

She appeared before Mr. Guy Whittaker for neglecting to attend to her two-year-old child who had been scalded with boiling milk.

Ebrahim Mahomed, an Indian, the father of the child, said he had lived with Lela until about 18 months ago,

and they had four children. He did not live with her now, but supported the children. The youngest child, Hada, was two years old. It was reported to him that the child had burned, so he asked Sergeant Le Roux of the South African Police to accompany him to Lela's house where they found the child. They took her to hospital.

Lela said that the father would not tell her where they were taking her child, so she threw herself in front of the car. Lela was found guilty of neglecting to take proper care of the child and fined £2 or six weeks' hard labour.

Girl Succeeds In Suicide Attempt

ST. LOUIS, Mo., July 10—Succeeding in her second attempt at suicide Genia Harvey, 20 years old, ended it all last Monday by swallowing sodium fluoride. Genia is said to have gone into the kitchen of the Pore College where she is lived, and told Marge Davis and Joseph Johnson, other employees of the college what she had done. Johnson and Miss Davis stretched Genia on a divan and immediately summoned medical aid. Refusing to give any reason for her act the despondent girl went into a fit of crying hysteria. She was later taken to the hospital where she died.

During the inquest witnesses testified that Genia had been in a desperate mood and had once before attempted to take her life. Johnson said that the only explanation that she would give after failing in her first attempt was that "it was a trifling matter."

A search revealed that no note was left by the girl and the sum of \$4.40 was found in her pocketbook. Genia is formerly from Troy, Mo., where her parents now live. Virginia Turner, a sister of the girl who lives in Brentwood, Mo., claimed the body and took it to Troy, where the funeral was held Thursday.

Montgomery Advertiser
July 12, 1936

A Raleigh Negro, condemned to die for murder, attempted suicide, but the effort failed. Negroes have no natural aptitude for suicide. They never do well in attempting it.

OKLAHOMA CO-ED ENDS OWN LIFE

MUSKOGEE, Okla., Sept. 3—(ANP)—Miss Ollie B. Wynn, popular 16-year-old manual training high school senior, died Monday at Provident Hospital, shortly after taking a fatal dose of carbolic acid in the presence of two girl companions with whom she had been riding homeward in a taxicab.

The girls, Miss Theresa Patterson and Miss Mabel Collins, had engaged a taxi driven by Lewis Simmons, and directed him to take them to South Fifth street. En route they saw Miss Wynn walking alone, stopped the cab and asked her to join them on the trip home. Miss Wynn got in and Simmons drove to the South Fifth address.

Thanks To Negro, Alabama Suicide Rate Is Low

TUSCALOOSA, Aug. 24.—(Special.)—Because of its large Negro population, Alabama's suicide rate is one of the lowest in the entire country. Dr. Roland M. Harper, statistician of the Alabama Geological Survey at the University of Alabama, has discovered.

The Negro race, he points out, "is not given to self-destruction." The rate of suicides to all deaths in the United States, Dr. Harper points out, has increased from .15 per cent in 1850 to 1.27 per cent in 1930. It tends to increase with the growth of cities and with the decline of the birth rate, but fluctuates with economic conditions.

In 12 Southern states in 1930, the year of the crash, 1.16 per cent of white deaths were suicides, and 1.14 per cent of the Negro deaths. The highest suicide rate in 1930 was in Nevada, where it caused 3.10 per cent of all deaths. Lowest was Mississippi with .40 per cent. South Carolina was next to Mississippi, and Alabama was third from the bottom with .65 per cent of all deaths resulting from suicide.

During the trip, according to reports, Simmons says he heard Miss Wynn say something about a drinking glass, as the three girls were laughing and talking about a small package Miss Wynn had in her hand, but the latter evaded all queries about the parcel.

Miss Patterson declared that she had detected an odor something like iodine and asked Miss Wynn what she had in the bottle. She and the Collins girl also tried to take the package from her but without success.

When the cab stopped, Miss Patterson said she tried to get out first, but Miss Wynn jumped out ahead of her, and running a short distance down the street, suddenly stopped and drank the bottle of carbolic acid before her friends could reach her. They called an ambulance and she was hurried to Provident Hospital where she died two hours later.

Mrs. Fay Roy Dies A Suicide

Mrs. Fay Roy dies a suicide—page 1

Finis was written and the tempestuous career of Mrs. Fay Roy came to a close early last Monday morning when the ill-fated young woman died in a local hospital as a result of a deadly poison administered by herself, probably in a fit of utter despondency. A desperate battle had been waged in the vestibule between life and death since that hectic Saturday morning she was rushed to the hospital after the commission of her rash act. Medical science exhausted every known antidote, remedy and experiment to fight off the creeping paralysis caused by one of the most deadly of drugs—but in vain. It became apparent earlier in the week that the fight was lost, and the scientists knew it was lost, but still they battled on. Now she is dead and charity falls like a mantle over her couch. The funeral was held on Wednesday at 2 o'clock from the funeral home of Robert C. Scott at 19 West Clay street with Dr. Gordon B. Hancock officiating. She now sleeps in a suicide's grave in Woodland Cemetery. Virtues and foibles alike are interred with her.

Janitor Looks for a Dead Cat; Finds Suicide

After finding man
Recluse Found Hanging in Home; Had Been Dead 4 Days.

9-14-36
MYSTERY DEEPENS AS PAPERS VANISH

Baltimore
Nothing Left to Give Clue to Man's Kin.

NEW YORK—After four days the apparent suicide of Leon Jones, 42, of 113 W. 117th Street who was found hanging in his apartment Friday afternoon is still a mystery.

Jones, who lived the life of a recluse at the unlucky address for nearly five years, was discovered by Thomas Johnson, superintendent of the building after the man had not been seen for several days.

His body was discovered hanging from the transome between the bedroom and living room of his apartment, after police forced their way into the tenement upon Johnson's request.

Looked for Dead Cat
The discovery came after Johnson had made a thorough search of the basement and ripped up several boards in an effort to detect the source of a foul odor which he believed came from a leaking sewer pipe or a dead cat or rat in the walls.

When all efforts failed, he started an inspection of the apartments in the belief that some tenant had probably locked a pet in the house and it had died.

When he found the apartment of Jones locked on the inside he requested police to aid him in forcing the door. They discovered the body of the man which had been dead approximately four days.

Discovers Blood
The element of mystery entered

the tragedy when a search of all of the dead man's effects failed to unearth one scrap of paper, letter or bit of information that would lead to the identity of any of his relatives or give a clue as to his home town.

Either all evidence that would lead toward this end was carefully destroyed by the suicide or by some other individual in the event that he was a victim of foul play.

The mystery was also increased by the fact that a matted pool of blood was discovered at the man's feet although he had to all appearances died from strangulation.

The man is believed to be a native of New Orleans. He had no friends or visitors during his entire five years' tenancy and did his own cooking and housework. His body was removed to the morgue. He worked steadily as a waiter at a downtown hotel, but no money, bankbooks or papers were discovered in the house or among his clothing.

Suicidal Attempt Made By Woman; Bullet Is Fired Near Heart

Attendants at Grady hospital Saturday night were employing every possible means to save the life of Mrs. Hattie Crawford 49, of 54 Leach street, NW., who several hours earlier is reported to have attempted suicide at her home by firing a bullet into the left side of her breast.

The condition of Mrs. Crawford late Saturday night was reported as 'very poor.' She was admitted to the hospital in an unconscious condition shortly after she allegedly shot herself in the bathroom of her home at 9:30 o'clock Saturday morning.

'Brooding over financials' was given as the cause of the attempted suicide. Mrs. Mollie Benton, sister of the victim, is recorded as saying her sister had been 'brooding over financials' and recently made the statement that 'I would rather be dead than living.'

Mrs. Benton who resides with Mrs. Crawford and her husband, M. C. Crawford, told Patrolmen T. H. Leathers and S. L. Ivey that around 9:30 o'clock Saturday morning she heard a noise that sounded as though a firecracker had exploded. The noise came from the bathroom, she stated in her interview with the investigating officers.

Mrs. Benton said she found her sister lying in the middle of the

bathroom floor. On finding that the wounded woman was too heavy for her to lift, she called Mrs. Crawford's husband who was driving out the front yard.

Mr. Crawford assisted in putting his wife in a bed and a Dr. Brothers' ambulance was summoned.

The patrolmen reported that Mrs. Crawford used a .38 calibre pistol, shooting herself in the breast. A further investigation of the shooting is being made by detectives.

Man Blows Brains Out With Shot Gun

EDWARD CURTIS FOUND DEAD IN BATH ROOM BY HIS WIFE

Besides his wife, Mrs. May Curtis, he is survived by a son and daughter who reside in the north, and a brother. This morning in the neighborhood of six o'clock Edward Curtis ended his life in the bath room of his home at 607 Montgomery street, by blowing his brains out with a shot gun. The body was carried to the Royall Undertaking Company to be prepared for burial.

Information concerning the act, as gathered from friends of the dead man, shows that about six o'clock this morning he arose from bed and called his wife. She, thinking that he had arisen to dress for his work as waiter at the Hotel DeSoto, paid but little attention to him and went back to sleep. About two hours afterwards she awoke and seeing his clothes on a nearby chair, began to make an investigation. She went upstairs to the bath room where she found his prostrate body on the floor. She called to her mother and grandmother who slept upstairs the former rushing in from an adjoining room and found him dead.

The entire top of the man's head was blown away by the violent explosion of the gun. It appears that he must have rested the muzzle of the gun on his head and pulled the trigger with his toe. No one in the house is said to have heard the explosion of the gun.

The dead man who had lived in Savannah about eight years, came here from Virginia and was well known among the hotel waiters because of his immaculate appearance at all times. In recent months he is said to have become rather dispondent and on several occasions expressed the opinion that he was going to commit suicide. He was known among the waiters at the hotel as "Gater."